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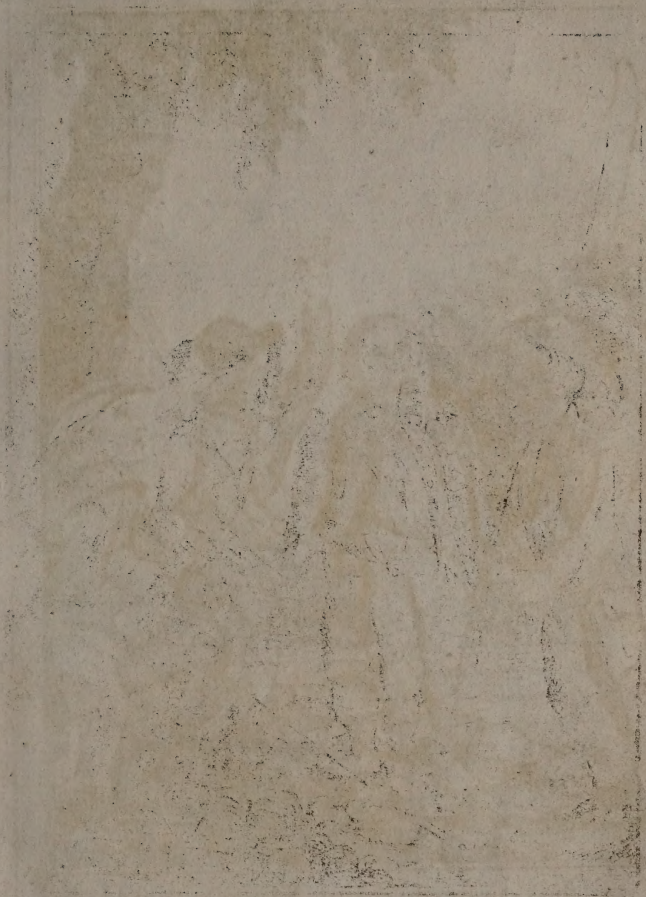

'Twas thus enrapt the Idiot NIXON ſtood!
Foredooming woe! and then predicting good!
Her conflicts paſt, Old England ſhall be gay,
And GEORGE the Son of GEORGE ſhall gain y day!

J.B.P——.

J.B. Prichard Del.

J. Stuart, Cheſt. Sc.

79165

THE

ORIGINAL PREDICTIONS

OF

ROBERT NIXON,

COMMONLY CALLED

The Cheshire Prophet;

IN DOGGREL VERSE:

PUBLISHED FROM AN AUTHENTIC MANUSCRIPT,

FOUND AMONG THE PAPERS OF

A CHESHIRE GENTLEMAN, LATELY DECEASED.

TOGETHER WITH

NIXON'S CHESHIRE PROPHECY

AT LARGE;

FROM

LADY COWPER'S CORRECT COPY,

IN THE REIGN OF QUEEN ANN:

WITH

HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL REMARKS;

AND

MANY INSTANCES WHEREIN IT HAS BEEN FULFILLED.

ALSO,

SOME PARTICULARS OF HIS LIFE;

BY JOHN OLDMIXON, ESQ. AND OTHERS.

Chester,

PRINTED AND SOLD BY W. MINSHULL:

SOLD ALSO BY G. SAEL, NO. 192, STRAND, LONDON;

AND BY ALL OTHER BOOKSELLERS.

[c. 1798]

WELLCOME INSTITUTE LIBRARY

THE PREFACE.

AT a time when the press is teeming with the prophecies of modern fanatics, it may not be amiss to rescue from oblivion the Original Predictions of a simple countryman, whose foreknowledge has been actually proved in a variety of instances; to the truth of which several very respectable persons have borne testimony:....And those circumstances which he foretold, and have not yet been fulfilled, are looked upon as certain, by most of the inhabitants of Cheshire and its vicinity.

The different accounts of Nixon's life and prophecies are given in the following pages, and the credit to be given to either of them is left for the reader to determine.

The cross on Delamere forest is sunk to a level with the ground; but the people in the neighbourhood pray heartily, that they may not see that day, when 'a crow from the top of it shall drink of the best blood in England;' and 'a boy with three thumbs shall hold three Kings horses, while England is three times won and lost!'

Whether

Whether or not the latter part of honest Nixon's Prophecy is now about to be fulfilled, it is impossible to say; but he predicts, that there will be 'a great scarcity of bread-corn' two years before the times will be 'unbareable.'

That Nixon may prove, in this last article, a FALSE prophet (although it has never yet been the case) is the ardent wish of every true friend of Old England, as well as

The Editor.

THE

ORIGINAL PREDICTIONS

OF

ROBERT NIXON.

THE

LIFE OF ROBERT NIXON,

COMMONLY CALLED

THE CHESHIRE PROPHET.

THE Prophecy of Nixon has so often given a name to the productions of authors of different principles, that it is almost become a doubt whether such a person ever existed. Passing through Cheshire, curiosity led me to inquire what credit these legends bore amongst the natives; and I was not a little surprized to find with what confidence they related events which have already come to pass within the memory of many of the inhabitants; and how strictly they adhered to the notion, that he would not fail in the rest. Amongst this number, was a name-sake and descendant of the same family with this famous ideot, who, at this time, lives not far from Vale-Royal, from whom I had mostly what follows, which he said he had often heard his father and other antient people in the country relate. I also obtained a manuscript copy, which seemed to bear the appearance of antiquity. Mr. Gerrard, Mr. Grimes, and others of the inhabitants of the forest of Delamere, very obligingly told me what they knew, and confirmed what was passed.

JOHN or JONATHAN NIXON, the father of our prophet, was an husbandman, who had the lease of a farm off the abbey of Vale-Royal, to this day known by the name of Bark or Bridge-house, in the parish of Over, near New-Church, and not far from Vale-Royal, on the forest of Delamere, which house is still kept up and venerated by the natives of Cheshire, for nothing else, as I could hear of, but this extraordinary person's birth, which took place on Whitsuntide, and he was christened by the name of Robert in the year 1467, about the seventh year of Edward IV. and from his infancy he was remarkable for a natural stupidity and invincible ignorance, so that it was with great difficulty his parents could instruct him to drive the team, tend the cattle, and such sort of rustic employments.

His parents, at their decease, left the farm and our Robert very young to the care of an elder brother, with whom he first gave an instance of that fore-knowledge which renders his name so famous.

As he was driving the team one day, whilst his brother's man guided the plough, he pricked an ox so very cruelly with his goad, that the plough-holder threatened to acquaint his master; on which Nixon said, the ox should not be his brother's three days hence; which accordingly happened, for a life dropping in the estate, the lord of the manor took the same ox for an herriot. *

During his residence here, he was chiefly distinguished for his simplicity, seldom spoke, and when he did it was with so rough a voice that it was painful to hear him; he was remarkably

* Or an acknowledgment, which by the tenure of some estates is given to every new lord of a manor.

markably satirical, and what he said had generally some prophetic meaning. It was about this time that the monk of Vale-Royal having displeased him, he said, in an angry tone,

When you the harrow come on high,
Soon a raven's nest will be:

Which is well known to have come to pass in the person of the last abbot of that place, whose name was Harrow. Being called before Sir Thomas Holcroft, he was put to death for denying the supremacy of King Henry VIII. Having suppressed the abbey, the King gave the domain to this knight and his heirs, who bore a raven for their crest.

At another time he told them, Norton and Vale-Royal abbies should meet on Octon-bridge, a thing at that time looked upon as improbable; yet those two abbies being pulled down, the stones were used for that purpose; and, what was more improbable still, a small thorn, growing in the abbey-yard, would become its door. We may easily guess, no one thought this last would ever come to pass, and especially as it was understood by every one at that time of day, that thorns never grew so large; but this shews the uncertain meaning of a prophecy, what we understand one way, possibly is meant quite different; so it happened in this case, for at the Reformation the savage ravagers, under the sanction of religion, sought nothing but rapine and plunder to enrich themselves, and under the name of banishing superstition and pulling down idolatry, spared not even the most venerable lineaments of antiquity, the most sacred piles, the most noble structures, or most valuable records, books written by our most venerable forefathers and heroic ancestors. Pieces of the nicest paint or figures for their workmanship, all being lost, irrecoverably lost, in one common fit of destructive zeal, which every hue and cry is too apt to raise in

the breast of a hot-headed bigot; whilst the truly religious, honest and learned men, regret, to this very day, the loss those destructive times have occasioned. Whilst these reached Vale-Royal, amongst the rest, this thorn, being cut down, was cast in the door-way, to prevent sheep, which grazed in the court, from going in.

But the Reformation he declares in still plainer terms, for he says,

A time shall come when priests and monks
Shall have no churches nor houses,
And places where images stood
Lined letters shall be good,
English books thro' churches are spread,
There shall be no holy bread.

It is not my intention to recite every particular he is said to have foretold, which either regard private families or past occasions; however, it may not be amiss to mention what is fresh in every one's memory who lives near Delamere forest, and was vouched to me by several of the oldest inhabitants:

Thro' Weaver-hall shall be a lone, *
Ridley-pool shall be sown and mown,
And Darnel-park shall be hacked and hewn.

The two wings of Weaver-hall are now standing, and between them is a cart-road; Ridley-pool is filled up, and made good meadow land; and in Darnel-park the trees are cut down, and it is made pasture ground.

I also was assured, he foretold the use of broad-wheels, &c. and that Northwich, now a considerable town of trade for salt,

* The term used in this country for a lane.

salt, will be destroyed by waters; which is expected to come to pass by the natives of Cheshire as much as any other part of his prophecy has done; and some urge, that the navigable cuts lately made is the water meant; but whether a prejudice against those useful improvements may not have given rise to this notion, time only can determine.

But what rendered Nixon the most noticed was, that at the time when the battle of Bosworth-field was fought between King Richard the third and King Henry the seventh, he stopt his team on a sudden, and with his whip pointing from one land to the other, cried, "Now Richard! Now Harry!" several times; till at last he said, "Now Harry, get over that ditch, and you gain the day." The plough-holder, amazed, related what had passed when he came home, and the truth of the prediction was verified by special messengers sent to announce the proclamation of Henry King of England on the field of battle.

The messenger who went this circuit, related on his return the predictions of Nixon concerning the King's success; which, though it had been confirmed by his arrival, had made it no news to the natives of those parts; but Henry, perhaps the wisest Prince of this time, not willing to be deceived, nor yet doubting the dispensation of Providence, though by the mouth of a fool, sent the same messenger back to find Nixon, and bring him before him. At the moment the King gave his orders, our prophet was in the town of Over, about which he ran like a madman, declaring the King had sent for him, and that he must go to court, and there be *clammed, i. e.* starved to death; such a declaration occasioned a great deal of laughing in the town, to think that his Majesty, so noted for his wisdom, should send for a dirty driveling clown to court, and, that being sent for, he should fear to be starved there; but how great

great was their surprise in a few days after, when the messenger, passing thro' the town, demanded a guide to find Nixon, who (then turning the spit at his brother's at the Bark-house) cried, "He is coming, he is now on the road for me;" but the astonishment of the family can scarcely be imagined, when on the messenger's arrival he demanded Nixon in the King's name: the people, who before scoffed at his simple appearance and odd sayings, and had pointed to the very children to make him their sport, were now confounded, on finding the most ridiculous of all he ever foretold (in their opinion) become a truth, which was vouched to their own eyes. Whilst hurried through the country, Nixon still loudly lamented that he was going to be starved at court.

He had no sooner arrived there, than the cautious King, willing to make trial of his fore-knowledge, devised the following scheme to prove it. Having hid a valuable diamond ring, which he commonly wore, after the most seemingly strict inquiry, made through the palace, whether any one had seen it; he sent for Nixon, telling him what a loss he had sustained, and that if he could not help him to find it, he had no hopes left. But how much surprised was the King when he got for answer that old proverb,

He who hideth can find.

On which he declared, with a smile, that he had done this only to try the prophet; but ever after ordered what he said should be carefully put in writing.

To prevent Nixon's being starved, his Majesty gave orders for him to have the liberty to range through the whole palace, and the kitchen was to be his more constant dwelling. Besides which, an officer was appointed to take care that he was neither

misused

misused or affronted by the servants, nor at a loss for any necessary of life. Thus situated, one would have thought want could never have reached him; yet one day, as the King was going to his hunting seat, Nixon ran to him, crying, begged in the most moving terms that he might not be left, for that if he were, his Majesty would never see him again alive; that he should be starved; that now was the time, and if he was left he must die.

The King, whose thoughts were doubtless fixed on the diversion he was going to, and supposing the matter so very unlikely to come to pass, only said it was impossible, and recommended him strongly to the officer's care; but scarcely was the King gone from the palace-gate, when the servants mocked and teazed Nixon to such a degree, that the officer, to prevent these insults, locked him up in a closet, and suffered no one but himself to attend on him, thinking that he should prevent this part of his prophecy from coming true: but a message of great importance coming from the King to this very officer, he, in his readiness to obey the royal command, forgot to set poor Nixon at liberty, and though he was but three days absent, when he recollected his prisoner, he found him at his return dead, as he had foretold, of hunger.

Thus evidenced, with what is passed, stands his prophecy in every mouth in Cheshire; yet a greater affront cannot be given than to ask a copy from the families said to be possessed of it. Every means, it is well known, has been used to smother the truth, perplex the curious, and even to abolish the very remembrance that such an one ever existed, but from what reason cannot appear, except that it is foretold the heir of O..... is to meet with some ignominious death at his own gate,

gate,* with other family events, which, though no person or time being perfectly distinguished, may perhaps occasion this secresy.

I must also observe, that the cross on Delamere forest, that is, three steps and the socket in which the cross formerly stood, are now sunk within a few inches of the ground, though all remembered to have been seen in the memory of man, nearly six feet above, the cross itself having been destroyed long since. It is also remarkable, that Headless cross is mentioned by Merlin de Rymer, and most other English and Scotch prophets, as the last place in England on which it is supposed a decisive action will happen; but as to any fixed period, when the things will come to pass, I cannot learn, all being mentioned with the greatest uncertainty.

* A few years ago (since the above was written) Mr. E....., of O....., was killed by a fall from his horse, at his own gate, as he was returning from hunting.

END OF THE LIFE OF NIXON.

THE

THE

ORIGINAL PREDICTIONS

OF

ROBERT NIXON,

AS DELIVERED BY HIMSELF,

IN

DOGGREL VERSE:

PUBLISHED FROM AN AUTHENTIC MANUSCRIPT,

FOUND AMONGST THE PAPERS OF A CHESHIRE GENTLEMAN,

LATELY DECEASED.

"WHEN a raven shall build in a stone lion's mouth,
On a church top beside the grey forest,
Then shall a King of England be drove from his crown,
And return no more.

When an eagle shall sit on the top of Vale-royal house,
Then shall an heir be born, who shall live to see great troubles in England.

There shall be a miller named Peter, with two heels on one foot, who shall distinguish himself bravely, and shall be knighted by the victor:
For foreign nations shall invade England;
But the invader shall be killed,
And laid across a horse's back,
And led in triumph.

A boy shall be born with three thumbs on one hand,
Who shall hold three Kings horses,
Whilst England three times is won and lost in one day.

But after this shall be happy days,
A new set of people of virtuous manners
Shall live in peace.
But the wall of Vale-Royal next the pond shall be the token of its truth,
For it shall fall:
If it fall downwards,
Then shall the church be sunk for ever:
But if it fall upwards against a hill,
Then shall the church and honest men live still.
Under this wall shall be found the bones of a British King.

Peckforton mill shall be removed to Ludington-hill,
And three days blood shall turn Noginshire mill.

But beware of a chance to the lord of Oulton,
Lest he should be hanged at his own door.

A crow shall sit on the top of Headless-cross,
In the forest so grey,
And drink of the nobles gentle blood so free.
Twenty hundred horses shall want masters,
Till their girths rot under their bellies.

Thro' our own money and our own men
Shall a dreadful war begin;
Between the sickle and the suck,
All England shall have a pluck;
And be several times forsworn,
And put to their wits end,

That

That it shall not be known, whether to reap their corn,
Bury their dead, or go to the field to fight.

A great scarcity of bread corn.

Foreign nations shall invade England with snow on their helmets,
And shall bring plague, famine, and murder, in the skirts of their garments.

A great tax will be granted, but never gathered.

Between a rick and two trees
A famous battle fought shall be.

London-ſtreet shall run with blood,
And at last shall ſink.
So that it shall be fulfilled,
Lincoln was, London is, and York shall be
The finest city of the three.

There will be three gates to London of imprisoned men for cowsters.
Then if you have three cows, at the first gate, sell one, and keep thee at home.
At the second gate sell the other two, and keep thee at home.
At the last gate all shall be done.

When Summer in Winter shall come,
And peace is made at every man's home,
Then shall be danger of war;
For though with peace at night the nation ring,
Men shall rise to war in the morning.

There will be a Winter council, a careful Christmas,
And a bloody Lent.

In those days there shall be hatred and bloodshed,
The father against his son, and the son against his father;
That one may have a house for lifting the latch of the door.
Landlords shall stand
With hat in their hands;
To desire tenants to hold their lands.

Great wars and pressing of soldiers,
But at last clubs and clouted shoes shall carry the day.

It will be good in these days for a man to sell his goods, and keep close at home.
Then forty pounds in hand
Will be better than forty pounds a year in land.
The cock of the North shall be made to flee,
And his feathers be plucked for his pride;
That he shall almost curse the day that he was born."

One asked Nixon, where he might be safe in those days?....
He answered,

" In God's croft, between the rivers Mersey and Dee.

Scotland shall stand more or less,
Till it has brought England to a piteous case.

The Scots shall rule England one whole year.

Three years of great wars,
And in all countries great uproars.
The first is terrible, the second worse, but the third unbareable.

Three

Three great battles;
One at Northumberland-bridge,
One at Cumberland-bridge,
And the other the South side of Trent.

Crows shall drink the blood of many nobles.
East shall rise against West, and North against South.

Then take this for good,
Noginshire mill shall run with blood,
And many shall fly down Wanslow-lane.

A man shall come into England,
But the son of a King crown'd with thorns
Shall take from him the victory.

Many nobles shall fight,
But a bastard Duke shall win the day,
And so without delay
Set England in a right way.

A wolf from the East shall right eagerly come,
On the South side of Sandford, on a grey Monday morn.
Where groves shall grow upon a green,
Beside green grey they shall flee
Into rocks, and many die.
They shall flee into Salt-strand,
And twenty thousand, without sword shall die each man.

The dark dragon over Sudsbrown,
Shall bring with him a royal band:
But their lives shall be forlorn,
His head shall be in Stafford town,
His tail in Ireland.

There

He shall boldly bring his men, thinking to win renown:
Beside a wall in forest fair he shall be beaten down.
On Hine's heath they shall begin this bloody fight,
And with trained steed shall hew each other's helmet bright:
But who shall win that day, no one can tell.

A Duke out of Denmark shall him dight,
On a day in England, and make many a Lord full low to light,
And the ladies cry 'Well away,'
And the black fleet with main and might
Their enemies full boldly there assail.

In Britain's land shall be a knight,
On them shall make a cruel fight,
A bitter boar with main and might
Shall bring a royal rout that day.
There shall die many a worthy knight,
And be driven into the fields green and grey.
They shall lose both field and fight.

The weary eagle shall to an island in the sea retire,
Where leaves and herbs grow fresh and green.
There shall he meet a lady fair,
Who shall say, 'Go help thy friend in battle slain:'
Then by the counsel of that fair,
He eagerly will make to flee
Twenty-six standard of the enemy.
A rampant lion in silver set, in armour fair,
Shall help the eagle in that tide,
When many a knight shall die.

The bear that hath been long tied to a stake, shall shake his chains,
That every man shall hear, and shall cause much debate.

The

The bull and the red rose shall stand in strife,
That shall turn England to much woe,
And cause many a man to lose his life.

In a forest stand oaks three,
Beside a headless cross.
A well of blood shall run and ree,
Its cover shall be brass,
Which shall ne'er appear,
Till horses feet have trod it bare:
Who wins it will declare.
The eagle shall so fight that day,
That ne'er a friend's from him away.
A hound without delay shall run the chace far and near.
The dark dragon shall die in fight.
A lofty head the bear shall rear,
The wild wolf so shall light.
The bridled steed against his enemies will fiercely fight.

A fleet shall come out of the North,
Riding on a horse of trees.
A white hind beareth he,
And three wreaths so free,
That day the eagle shall him slay,
And on a hill set his banner straightway.
That lion who's forsaken been and forced to flee,
Shall hear a woman shrilly say,
'Thy friends are killed on yonder hill.'
Death to many a knight this day.
With that the lion bears his banner to a hill
Within a forest that's so plain,
Beside a headless cross of stone,
There shall the eagle die that day,
And the red lion get renown.

A great

A great battle shall be fought by crowned Kings three;
One shall die, and a bastard Duke will win the day.

In Sandyford there lies a stone,
A crown'd King shall lose his head on.

In those dreadful days, five wicked priests heads shall be sold
for a penny.

Slaughter shall rage to such a degree,
And infants left by those that are slain,
That damsels shall with fear and glee
Cry, 'Mother, mother, here's a man!'

Between seven, eight, and nine,
In England, wonders shall be seen.
Between nine and thirteen
All sorrow shall be done.

Then rise up Richard, son of Richard,
And bless the happy reign.
Thrice happy he who sees this time to come,
When England shall know rest and peace again.

END OF NIXON'S ORIGINAL PROPHECIES.

THE

THE FOLLOWING

PREDICTIONS

OF

ROBERT NIXON,

ARE COPIED FROM

A COLLECTION OF OLD PAMPHLETS.

THE famous Cheshire prophet, Nixon, besides his prophecies relative to the fate of private families, also predicted much of public affairs, which we find literally verified by the sequel.

On the Christmas before he went to court, being among the servants at Mr. Cholmondeley's house, to the surprize of them all, he suddenly started up, and said,

" I must prophecy." He went on, " If the favorite * of a King shall be slain, the master's neck shall be cleft in twain. And the men of the North † shall sell precious blood; yea, their own blood. And they shall sacrifice a noble warrior ‡

* The Duke of Buckingham (favorite of James and Charles I. who was beheaded) assassinated by John Felton.

† The Scots, who sold their King, Charles I. for a large sum of money, to the English rebels.

‡ Suppose the Marquis of Montrose.

to the idol, and hang up his flesh in the high places: and a storm shall come out of the North, which shall blow down the steeples of the South: and the labourer shall rise above his lord, and the harvest shall in part be trampled down by horses, and the remainder lie waste, to be devoured by birds.

"When *an oak tree* shall be softer than men's hearts, then look for better times, but they be but beginning.

"The departure of a great man's * soul shall trouble a river hard by, and overthrow trees, houses, and estates. From that part of the house, from whence the mischief came, you must look for the cure. First comes joy, then sorrow; after mirth comes mourning.

"I see men, women, and children, spotted † like beasts, and their nearest and dearest friends affrighted at them. I see towns on fire, and innocent blood shed; but when men and horses walk upon the water, then shall come peace and plenty to the people, but trouble is preparing for Kings: and the *great yellow fruit* ‡ shall come over to this country, and flourish: and I see this tree take deep root, and spread into a thousand branches, which shall afterwards be at strife one with another, because of their number: and there shall come a wind from the South, and the West, which shall shake the tree. I see multitudes of people running to and fro, and talking

* Suppose Oliver Cromwell, at whose death the greatest storm of wind happened that had been known in England.

† The great plague and fire of London were here very plainly foretold.

‡ The Great Yellow Fruit, suppose the Prince of Orange, King William III.

talking in a strange tongue. And there shall be a famine * in the midst of great plenty, and earthquakes and storms shall level and purify the earth."

After these sayings, which every one, with the slightest knowledge of our history, will instantly apply to those events which they so wonderfully foretold, Nixon was silent, and relapsed into his wonted stupidity; from which he did not recover until many weeks after, when he became again inspired, and gave vent to those remarkable predictions which were collected by Mr. Oldmixon. Those which we have just now related, were taken down from the prophet's mouth by the steward, in pursuance of the orders of Mr. Cholmondeley himself; and the original manuscript is now in the hands of a gentleman in Shropshire.

* This was said in the book from whence these predictions were extracted, to mean oppression of the poor.

NIXON'S
CHESHIRE PROPHECY,

AT LARGE;

FROM

LADY COWPER'S CORRECT COPY.

WITH

HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL REMARKS;

AND

MANY INSTANCES WHEREIN IT HAS BEEN FULFILLED.

ALSO

HIS LIFE:

BY JOHN OLDMIXON, ESQ.

NIXON, from 'mongst the dark decrees of Fate,
Says, 'GEORGE the Son of GEORGE shall make us great!'

INTRODUCTION.

THIS remarkable Prophecy has been carefully revised, corrected, and improved; also some account given of our author, Robert Nixon, who was but a kind of ideot, and used to be employed in following the plough. He had lived in some farmers families, and was their drudge and their jest.

At

At last, Thomas Cholmondeley, of Vale-Royal, Esq. took him into his house, and he lived there when he composed this prophecy, which he delivered with as much gravity and solemnity as if he had been an oracle; and it was observed, that though the fool was a driveler, and could not speak common sense when he was uninspired, yet in delivering his prophecies, he spoke plainly and sensibly; how truly will be seen in the following pages.

As to the credit of this prophecy, I dare say it is as well attested as any of Nostradamus's or Merlin's, and come to pass as well as the best of Squire Bickerstaff's: It is plain enough, that great men in all ages had recourse to prophecy as well as the vulgar. I would not have all grave persons despise the inspiration of Nixon. The late French King gave audience to an inspired Farrier, and rewarded him with an hundred pistoles for his prophetical intelligence; though by what I can learn, he did not come near our Nixon for gifts.

The simplicity, the circumstances, and history, of the Cheshire Prophecy are so remarkable, that I hope the public will be as much delighted as I was myself.

By the way, this is not a Prophecy of to-day; 'tis as old as the Powder-Plot, and the story will make it appear, that there is as little imposture in it as the Jacobites pretend there is in the person it seems to have an eye to: but whether they are both impostures alike or not, I leave the reader to determine.

J. Oldmixon.

THE

THE PROPHECY.

IN the reign of King James the First, there lived a man, generally reputed a fool, whose name was Nixon. One day, when he returned home from ploughing in the field, he laid the things down which he had in his hands, and continuing for some time in a seemingly deep and thoughtful meditation, at length he pronounced, in a loud hoarse voice, "Now I will prophecy." And spoke as follows:

"When a raven shall build in a stone lion's mouth on the top of a church in Cheshire, then a King of England shall be driven out of his kingdom, and never return more.

"When an eagle shall sit on the top of the house, then an heir shall be born to the Cholmondeley family; and this heir shall live to see England invaded by foreigners, who shall proceed as far as a town in Cheshire; but a miller, named Peter, shall be born with two heels on one foot, and at that time living in a mill of Mr. Cholmondeley's, he shall be instrumental in delivering the nation.

"The person who then governs the nation will be in great trouble, and skulk about: The invading King shall be killed, laid across a horse's back like a calf, and led in triumph. The miller having been instrumental in it, shall bring forth the person that then governs the kingdom, and be knighted for what he has done; and after that England shall see happy days. A young new set of men, of virtuous manners, shall come, who shall prosper, and make a flourishing church for two hundred years.

"As a token of the truth of all this, a wall of Mr. Cholmondeley's shall fall: If it falls downwards, the church shall be oppressed,

oppressed, and rise no more: but if upwards, next the rising hill on the side of it, then it shall flourish again. Under this wall shall be found the bones of a British King.

"A pond shall run with blood three days, and the Cross-stone Pillar in the Forest sink so low into the ground, that a crow from the top of it shall drink of the best blood in England.

"A boy shall be born with three thumbs, and shall hold three Kings horses, while England shall be three times won and lost in one day."

THE original may be seen in several families in that county, and in particular in the hands of Mr. Egerton, of Oulton, with many other remarkables; as, that Peckforton windmill should be removed to Ludington hill, and that horses saddled should run about till their girths rotted away. But this is sufficient to prove Nixon as great a prophet as Partridge, and we shall give other proofs of it before we have done with him.

I know your prophets are generally for Raw-head and Bloody-bones, and therefore do not mind it much; or I might add, that Oulton mill shall be driven with blood instead of water: But these soothsayers are great butchers, and every hall is with them a slaughter-house.

Now as for authorities to prove this prophecy to be genuine, and how it has been hitherto accomplished, I might refer myself to the whole county of Chester, where it is in every one's mouth, and has been so these forty years. As much as I have of the manuscript was sent me by a person of sense and veracity, and as little partial to visions as any body. For

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my own part, I build nothing on this or any other prophecy; only there is something so very odd in the story, and so pat in the wording of it, that I cannot help giving it as I found it.

The family of the Cholmondeleys is very antient in this county, and takes its name from a place so called, near Nantwich; there are also Cholmton and Cholmondeston; but the seat of that branch of the family, which kept our prophet Nixon, is at Vale-Royal,* on the river Weaver, in Delamere forest. It was formerly an abbey, founded by Edward I. and came to the Cholmondeleys from the famous family of the Holcrofts. When Nixon prophesied, this family was near being extinct, the heir having married Sir Walter St. John's daughter, a lady not esteemed very young, who, notwithstanding, being with child, fell in labour, and continued so for many days: During which time, an eagle sat upon the house-top, and flew away when she was delivered of a son.

A raven is also known to have built in a stone lion's mouth, in the steeple of the church of Over, in the forest of Delamere. Not long before the abdication of King James, the wall spoken of fell down, and fell upwards; and in removing the rubbish, were found the bones of a man of more than ordinary size. A pond at the same time ran with water that had a reddish tincture, and was never known to have done so before or since.

Headless Cross, in the forest, which in the memory of man was several feet high, is now only half a foot from the ground.

* It is reported, that there is a room in this house, the door and windows of which are kept closely fastened, and no one is ever permitted to enter the same, excepting the next heir, when he attains his twenty-first year, at which time he goes in alone, and when he returns it is shut up as before.

In the parish of Budworth, a boy was born, about eighteen years ago, with three thumbs; the youth is still living there; and the miller Peter lives in Noginshire mill, in expectation of fulfilling this prophecy on the person of Perkin: He hath also two heels on one foot, and I find he intends to make use of them in the interest of King George, for he is a bold Briton, and a loyal subject, zealous for the Protestant succession in the illustrious house of Hanover, has a vote for the knights of the shire, and never fails to give it on the right side; in a word, Peter will prate or box for the good cause that Nixon has listed him in, and if he does not do the business, this must be said of him, that no man will bid fairer for it; which the Lady Egerton was so apprehensive of, that wishing well to another Restoration, she often instigated her husband to turn him out of the mill; but he looked upon it as a whimsy, and so Peter still continues there, in hopes of being as good a knight as Sir Philip his landlord was.

Of this Peter I have been told, that the Lady Narcliff, of Chelsea, and the Lady St. John, of Battersea, together with several other persons of credit and fashion, have often been heard to talk, and that they all asserted their knowledge of the truth of our prophecy and its accomplishment, with many particulars that are more extraordinary than any I have yet mentioned.

The noise of Nixon's predictions reaching the ears of King James the first, he would needs see this fool, who cried and made ado that he might not go to court, and the reason that he gave was, that he should be STARVED....(A very whimsical fancy of his: Courts are not places where people use to starve in, when they once come there, whatever they did before.).... The King being informed of Nixon's refusing to come, said he would take particular care that he should not be starved,

and

and ordered him to be brought up. Nixon cried out, He was sent for again, and soon after the messenger arrived, who brought him up from Cheshire.

How or whether he prophesied to his Majesty, nobody can tell; but he is not the first fool that has made a good court prophet.

That Nixon might be well provided for, it was ordered he should be kept in the kitchen, where he grew so troublesome in licking and picking the meat, that the cooks locked him up in a hole, and the King going on a sudden from Hampton-court to London, they forgot the fool in a hurry, and he was really starved to death.

There are a great many passages of this fool-prophet's life and sayings transmitted in tradition from father to son in this county palatine; as, that when he lived with a farmer, before he was taken into Mr. Cholmondeley's family, he goaded an ox so cruelly, that one of the ploughmen threatened to beat him for abusing his master's beast. Nixon said, My master's beast will not be his three days. A life in an estate dropping in that time, the lord of the manor took the same ox for an herriot. This account, as whimsical and romantic as it is, was told to the Lady Cowper, in the year 1670, by Dr. Patrick, late Bishop of Ely, then chaplain to Sir Walter St. John; and that lady had the following farther particulars, relating to this prophecy, and the fulfilling of many parts of it, from Mrs. Chute, sister of Mrs. Cholmondeley, of Vale-Royal, who affirmed, That a multitude of people gathering together to see the eagle before mentioned, the bird was frightened from her young; that she herself was one of them, and the cry among the people was, Nixon's prophecy is fulfilled, and we shall have a foreign King. She declared, that she read over

the prophecy many times, when her sister was with child of the heir who now enjoys the estate. She particularly remembered that King James the II. was plainly pointed at, and that it was foretold he should endeavor to subvert the laws and religion of this kingdom, for which reason they would rise and turn him out; that the eagle of which Nixon prophesied perched in one of the windows all the time her sister was in labour. She said it was the biggest bird she ever saw; that it was in a deep snow, and that it perched on the edge of a great bow window, which had a large border on the outside, and that she and many others opened the window to try to scare it away, but it would not stir till Mrs. Cholmondeley was delivered; after which it took flight to a great tree over against the room her sister lay in, where having staid about three days, it flew away in the night. She affirmed further to the Lady Cowper, that the falling of the garden wall was a thing not to be questioned, it being in so many people's memory: That it was foretold that the heir of Vale-Royal should live to see England invaded by foreigners, and that he should fight bravely for his King and his country: That the miller mentioned is alive, and expects to be knighted, and is in the very mill that is foretold: That he should kill two invaders, who should come in, the one from the West, and the other from the North: That he from the North should bring with him of all nations, Swedes, Danes, Germans, and Dutch; and that in the folds of his garments he should bring fire and famine, plague and murder: That many great battles should be fought in England, one upon London-bridge, which would be so bloody, that people will ride in London streets up to their horses bellies in blood; that several other battles should be fought up and down most parts of Cheshire; and that the last that ever would be fought in England, should be on Delamere forest: That the heir of Oulton, whose name is E.....n,

and

and has married Earl Cholmondeley's sister, should be hanged up at his own gate.

Lastly, Nixon foretels great glory and prosperity to those who stand up in defence of their laws and liberties, and ruin and misery to those who should betray them. He says, the year before this would happen, bread corn would be very dear, and that the year following more troubles should begin, which would last three years; that the first would be moderate, the second bloody, and the third intolerable; that unless they were shortened, no mortal could bear them; and that there were no mischiefs but what poor England would feel at that time. But that GEORGE, the SON of GEORGE, * should put an end to all. That afterwards the church should flourish, and England be the most glorious nation upon earth.

Lady Cowper was not content to take these particulars from Mrs. Chute, but she inquired of Sir Thomas Aston, of the truth of this prophecy, and he attested it was in great reputation in Cheshire, and that the facts were known by every one to have happened as Nixon said they would; adding, that the morning before the garden wall fell, his neighbour, Mr. Cholmondeley, going to ride out a hunting, said, "Nixon seldom fails, but now I think he will; for he foretold that this day my garden wall would fall, and I think it looks as if it would stand these forty years:" That he had not been gone a quarter of an hour, before the wall split, and fell upwards against the rising of the hill, which, as Nixon would have it, was the presage of a flourishing church.

As to the removal of Peckforton mill, it was done by Sir John Crewe, the mill having lost its trade there, for which he

* The Original Prophecy says, "Richard, the son of Richard..... See page 16.

he ordered it to be set upon Ludditon hill; and being asked if he did it to fulfil the prophecy, he declared he never thought of it. I myself have inquired of a person who knows Mr. Cholmondeley's pond as well as Rosamond's in St. James's park, and he assured me, the falling of the wall, and the pond running blood (as they call it) are facts which in Cheshire any one would be reckoned mad for making the least question of them.

As there are several particulars in this prophecy, which remain unfulfilled; so when they come to pass, some other circumstances may be added, which are not convenient to be told until accomplished.

If I had a mind to look into the antiquities of this county, I might find that prodigies and prophecies are no unusual things there. Cambden tells us, that at Brereton, not many miles from Vale-Royal, which gave name to a famous, antient, numerous, and knightly family, there is a thing as strange as the perching of the eagle, or the falling of the wall, which he says was attested to him by many persons, and was commonly believed; that before any heir of this family dies, there are seen, in a lake adjoining, the bodies of trees swimming upon the water for several days together. He likewise adds, that near the abbey of St. Maurice, in Burgundy, there is a fish-pond, in which a number of fish are put, equal to the number of monks of that place; and if any one of them happens to be sick, there is a fish seen floating on the water; and in case the fit of sickness proves fatal to the monk, the fish foretels it by its own death some days before. This the learned Cambden relates in his description of Cheshire, and the opinion of the trees swimming in the lake near Brereton prevails all about the country to this day, only with this difference, that some say 'tis one log that swims, and some say many.

Lancashire,

Lancashire, which is not far off, has been famous for witches, and I am afraid Cheshire is a little infected by its neighbourhood. Those that will not believe our prophecy, may leave it alone; but if hope is a good help to faith, I shall not be long among the incredulous.

J. Oldmixon.

THE LIFE OF NIXON,

THE CHESHIRE PROPHET.

TO JOHN OLDMIXON, ESQ.

NANTWICH, MARCH 24, 1714.

SIR,

I Have read over your Cheshire Prophecy, and must needs say, that what you have added is to be found in the original, written in doggrel verse: I have read it over and over; and though it is longer than your prophecy, yet I think the substance of it is there; and I shall now give you some material passages which will serve to make your prophecy compleat. To these I shall add a short account of his life, as I have been able to inform myself of it by old people. I could meet but with one man who remembered the prophet, and that was old Woodman, of Copnal.

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He says, that Nixon was a short, squab fellow; had a great head, and goggle eyes; that he used to drivel as he spoke, which was very rarely, and was extremely surly. He particularly had a spite against children, and would run after them to beat them when they came in his way, especially if they made sport with him, as he said they used to do, and himself among the rest when he was a lad.

He was at first plough-boy to farmer Crowton, of Swanlow, and ſo stubborn that they could make him do nothing without beating. They could ſeldom get any thing out of him but yes and no: and if he ſpoke much more, it was unintelligible; nay, he would hardly ſay no and yes, unless he was pinched by hunger. He had a very good stomach; and the report was, that he would eat up a ſhoulder of mutton at a meal, if they would let him, and a good luncheon of bread and cheese after it. The people had, it seems, a strange reverence even for his stupidity; and they took his silence to be like that of an oracle, as portentous as if he prophesied.

The first time he was found out to be a prophet, was upon this occasion.....Farmer Crowton being one day at plough in a field, near the river Weaver, in Swanlow parish, and his boy Nixon following him, the boy stopt on a sudden, dropt his bottle and budget, which he carried to the field with him, and stood motionless, with his eyes fixed towards heaven. Neither words nor blows could get him out of this trance for the space of an hour. When he recovered, he took up the things he had dropt, and followed the plough. His master, and the men that were at work in the same field, stood by him all the while, taking him to be in a fit; but wondered still that he stood upright, and did not fall down. He himself seemed to be insensible of any alteration that had happened to him. But, for a quarter of an hour after, he talked very rationally

tionally of several things that had been done some time before, and dropt expressions of others that were to be done; which presently made his master, and those that were with him, conclude that Nixon's dulness had something sacred in it, and that his words were oracles, especially when some little things he foretold fell out according to his prediction. It was with this farmer that he lived when he prophesied of his master's ox, as is mentioned in his prophecy.

I must correct some errors that you have been led into by the imperfect copies of his prophecy; as that about the falling of the wall, which some zealous people have applied to the church; whereas, in truth, it has a literal reference to the state only. Woodman said, the common tradition has been, That when the wall belonging to Vale-Royal house fell down, it was to denote some remarkable change in the government: That if it was a serene day, and the wall fell inward, it signified an advantageous and happy change; but if it were a stormy day, and fell outward, and any stones fell into the brook, it signified the direct contrary. To this he added, that the Cholmondeley family, whose seat it was, kept several workmen in yearly pay to support the wall, and every month to inspect it all round; that it was buttressed both within and without; and the week before it fell, the workmen gave in their report, that it was so strong it might reasonably last an hundred years, without any repairs.

This, I assure you, is not only what the old man told me, but what I have heard from several others, and can get well attested, if it is thought proper: As also the particulars of the falling of the wall, which are these:

'Upon the 4th of August, 1688, at about eleven o'clock 'in the forenoon, being a calm and clear day, without the

'least breath of wind, that wall fell flat inwards all at once, 'and not so much as one single stone fell outwards.'

This happening so little a while before the Revolution, it was taken notice of as an accident which was very much to our advantage: And as there was a greater rising for the Prince of Orange in Cheshire, than in any other county in England, why may we not imagine that Nixon's Prophecy contributed very much to it? The objection to this may be, that the owner of the house, Thomas Cholmondeley, Esq. was a Jacobite; and it is not likely that any thing about him could bode well to the Revolution. But his being a Jacobite gives the greater authority to the prediction, and the fulfilling of it: For it is not likely that one, who was an enemy to the Prince of Orange, should let a miracle be wrought in his house in favor of the happy change he soon after accomplished. I should not have made this digression, had not some silly people, almost as stupid as Nixon, but by no means so well gifted in prophecy, given out, that the falling of the wall denoted the rising of the Pretender; and this too just as he was running away from Scotland.

I cannot help observing to you on this occasion, that some of us in this county were strangely spirited by your prophecy. When the rebels advanced to Preston, we were told, that they intended to march through our county into Flintshire and Denbighshire; if they had, their rout must have been through Delamere forest, where Nixon lived and prophesied; and the miller Peter, with his countrymen, were resolved to have given them such a reception, as would have given very great credit to your prophecy, which is abused when any interpretation is applied to it that has an eye to popery and slavery: For, as great a fool as Nixon was, he was not so stupid as our modern zealots, nor ever dropt a word against the Protestant religion.

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To return to old Woodman: He informed me further, that after it was known what a prophet farmer Crowton had in his family, Mr. Cholmondeley sent for the fellow, and kept him at his house, giving him in charge to his steward, whom he ordered to try whether he could make any thing of him, and teach him to read. But Nixon's stupidity increased upon him, the more the steward endeavored to improve him; and the most he could do with him, was to make him hold his goad right, and drive oxen at plough. As he was once in the field with the rest of Mr. Cholmondeley's servants, he let fall his goad on a sudden, as he had dropt his budget and bottle formerly. He stood motionless after the same manner, with his eyes fixed towards heaven. The servants talked to him, and beat him to get to his work, but all to no purpose. He remained in a sort of a trance for the space of an hour; and then recovering, he took up his goad, and went on with his business as though nothing had befallen him. One of Mr. Cholmondeley's men asked him, What ailed him? and why he stood so long? To which Nixon replied, That he had seen those things which man never saw before. He then discoursed to the servants, that crowded about him, for near two hours, and spoke as reasonable as the best of them could have done, without any manner of hesitation.

He foretold the civil wars, the death of King Charles I. the restoration of King Charles II. the abdication of King James II. the Revolution, and glorious war with France, and the flourishing state of this kingdom afterwards: Adding, "that these things will as certainly happen, as that I shall be sent for by the King, and be starved to death." When he had finished his speech, he returned to his natural dulness and silence: and unless he had been in one of his trances, he was always dull and mute; but while he was uttering his prophecies, he spoke clearly, and with an air of assurance that they

would be accomplished. The servants, as soon as they came home, told their master of this prodigy; and Mr. Cholmondeley ordered them to write down as much of it as they could remember, which they did, and it is preserved in that family to this day; together with some less material hints, as hard weather, and scarcity of provisions, &c. which would certainly happen. That family has always locked it up as a treasure, and whatever pains I have taken to procure a copy of it, I could never succeed, and despair now of getting it. Mr. Egerton, of Oulton, who is nearly related to the Cholmondeley family, has a copy of it also, but he will not part with it. Both of those families lay great stress on Nixon's predictions; and, I must tell you, they are two of the most antient and honorable families in our county.

You have mentioned Nixon's being sent for to court by King James the first. Woodman says it was thus:....When he came to court, the King gave him in charge to one of his officers, commanding him to keep him in close confinement, and to make strict observations on his behaviour, that he might be assured there was nothing of imposture in him. This gentleman kept Nixon locked up, and going in a hurry with the King to Theobalds, he forgot to take care of him, and leave him provisions till his return; by which means he was starved to death. It must be observed, that Nixon could not speak, except it was immediately after he came out of his trance, and never could be brought to pronounce a sensible word more than aye or no, as hath been before observed, unless when he was pronouncing his oracles.

There happened something with respect to Nixon and his going to court, like what I met with in the pamphlet you sent me, called *The Drummer of Tedworth:* For as that drummer left off beating when King Charles's courtiers came to be

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on the watch with him, and would not satisfy their curiosity; so our clown of a prophet, after he came to court, was entirely dumb, and pronounced no more prophecies. It is said, he was not long there before he was starved to death.

Nixon was very grateful to his master Cholmondeley; he prophesied that the heir to be born to the family, threescore and ten years after, should be endowed with very eminent qualifications, and arrive at greater honors than any of his ancestors had done: That he should distinguish himself by his loyalty and services to the King then reigning; and that, after the happy settlement which would succeed the struggle, the peace would be lasting, with a continued series of honors and glory to the nation. This child, said Nixon, shall be known by the appearance of an eagle at the time of his birth, with the circumstances mentioned in your prophecy. A long time before the eagle appeared, the country people used to look out for it, and as often as the lady of Vale-Royal lay-in, they would cry, Where is the eagle? When will Nixon's heir be born? The appearance of the eagle was about five and twenty years ago: The lady who lay-in was aunt to Henry St. John, late Lord Bolingbroke; when she was in labour, she heard great shoutings and acclamations of joy; and inquiring the reason, was told, the eagle so long talked of was come. Upon which her sister and Mrs. J. S. who are both living, went to the window, saw the eagle sitting on the bough, and looked at it above a quarter of an hour. It was seen also by several thousands of people, and is such a confirmation of Nixon's prophecy, that the truth of it is no where doubted of, either by gentle or simple.

There is some variation in the original prophecy from what is mentioned in your prophecy about the competitors for the kingdom; the Germans, Dutch, and Danes, are to conquer those

those that bring fire and famine, plague and murder, in the folds of their garments; and we can understand none but the French by such bloody invaders; none but French Papists would bring such destructions among Protestants. As for the miller Peter, he was born about the time of the Revolution; and Nixon prophesied that he should have two heels on one foot, and be knighted; the two heels he hath already, but the spurs are not come to his lot. Yet, however, the country people in this neighbourhood have made a knight of him these many years, and honest Peter, the miller, is Sir Peter in every one's mouth.

I must here correct an error of Mr. Addison, in his Freeholder, who has not read your prophecy with that attention and regard which a thing of such importance deserves; for he gives the miller two thumbs, whereas Nixon gives him two heels. A mistake in the text of a prophecy is of a very dangerous consequence; and I doubt not, but upon this notice, in future editions, this error will be corrected, and justice done to honest Peter the miller.

I am, Sir, yours, &c.

W. E.